

Leocadia Leandro García House
Main Plaza by the Rio Grande River
Roma, Texas

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Western Office, Division of Design and Construction
San Francisco, California

LEOCADIA LEANDRO GARCIA HOUSE

Roma, Starr County, Texas

ADDRESS: Main Plaza by the Rio Grande River
Roma, Texas

OWNER: Xavier Ramirez, Roma, Texas

OCCUPANT: Abandoned

USE: Not used

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TEX.
214. Roma
2-

PART I: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Border troubles in Texas during the turbulent nineteenth century encouraged much movement of population on both sides of the Rio Grande and in both directions depending on the disturbance.

The Leocadia Leandro Garcia house was built by a widow with children who fled Mexico, presumably during the eighteen fifties. The builder was probably the same builder as the one who built the Noah Cox house (John Vale) directly across the plaza in 1850. Wall construction techniques are uniquely similar; and, on examination and comparison, one can easily believe that the two houses were the product of the same workmen.

Originally, the house seems to have had commercial space on the ground floor with residential space above on the second. The house was later remodeled into one large space above the existing single space below---its function being changed into a building for "bailes" or "fandangos."

Walls are of sandstone, covered with a splatter-finish coating of lime stucco, then painted olive green and gold. The structure occupies the crown of a sandstone bluff overlooking the river, affording an exciting view from several directions. Cast iron balconies made it possible to enjoy activity on the plaza as well as on the river itself.

The structure is abandoned, and seems not to have been occupied since the early thirties. It remained in the Garcia family for many years, but is presently owned by Xavier Ramirez.

TEX.
214-Roma
2

TEX-3131
Page 2

REFERENCES AND SOURCES:

Cleotilde Cox	Roma, Texas (age 94 years) Personal interview
Filomino Gongora	Roma, Texas (age 87 years) Personal interview
Mrs. Florence Johnson Scott	801 East Main, Rio Grande City, Texas Personal interview

PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. Architectural interest and merit: The structure is rectangular in plan two stories high. It seems that when first built, the house had six rooms--three north and three south on each side of a central hall running parallel to the long axis. The hall terminated to the Rio Grande side(west) with a door and viewing balcony. Downstairs, or on the ground floor, most of the floor area was open for commercial reasons. Probably the east portion downstairs was partitioned into a lower stair hall with access doors both south and north. The kitchen is a puzzle, as chimneys do not exist to indicate a kitchen within. It is probable that the kitchen was housed in a separate building, as was often the case during this period. There were stables and latrines within the enclosed patio to the south, but these have disappeared (except for the latrine). The condition of the fabric is poor. Leaks from the roof have caused considerable damage within. The masonry wall seems to be in reasonably good shape.
- B. Technical description of the exterior.
1. Overall dimensions: 25'-8" by 60'-4"
 2. Foundations: Unknown, but very likely sandstone bearing on surface outcropping of rock.
 3. Wall construction: Sandstone rubble neatly laid. This is covered with splatter-finish lime stucco outside and smooth plaster inside. Bands of smooth stucco appear at corners of building vertically,

run horizontally at roof line, in alignment with upper window sills, and about three feet above floor level on first floor. Also, splatter-finish stucco is omitted around opening, a line of smooth plaster serving instead. The splatter-finish areas are painted olive green, the horizontal bands and vertical corners of plain stucco are painted yellow-gold, and the plain stucco areas around openings are painted white.

4. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: Small balconies on second floor from doorways on three facades. These balconies have cast iron railings. No labels could be found on railings to indicate the source of manufacture.
5. Chimneys: None evident.
6. Openings: doorways and doors. Double doors at river and opening to plaza. Single doors with sidelights opening to balconies on second floor. Two-panel doors existing not original. Windows and shutters: remaining windows wood, double hung, four light. Screens existing not on original structure. No evidence of rejas or shutters.
7. Roof: shape, covering. Flat, pitched to drain to south. Stone parapets all sides but south, where a simple wood eave exists. Roof wood.

C. Technical description of interior.

1. Floor plans: See "Architectural interest and merit" above.
2. Stairway: Single, open wooden stairway runs along inside east wall.
3. Flooring: Pine.
4. Wall and Ceiling finish. Walls smooth lime plaster, ceiling wood with exposed beams below, beaded ceiling (not original) above.
5. Doorways and doors. Original interior doors unknown. None existing in present structure.

6. Trim. Plain wood not moulded.
7. Hardware. Not significant.
8. Lighting. None. Used tallow candles and kerosene lamps. Remnants of electrical system not original.
9. Heating, fireplaces, stoves, etc. None evident.

D. Site.

1. Orientation. Principal facade faces plaza to north.
2. Enclosures, fences, etc. Entire rear yard enclosed by plastered sandstone wall.
3. Outbuildings. One stone latrine center rear of south yard. There were possibly stables and kitchen not extant.
4. Walks, driveways, etc. Concrete walk on west not original.
5. Landscaping, gardens, etc. Not extant.

PREPARED BY W. Eugene George, Jr. 7 December, 1961
W. Eugene George, Jr., A. I. A.

APPROVED Charles S Pope Date January 9, 1962
Architect, Historic Structures, WODC - NPS